



# DEVOTION TO SAINT JOSEPH

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1 "Devotion to Saint Joseph", *The Dublin Review*, 1871  
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## Quemadmodum Deus

### **Pope Pius IX**

*As almighty God appointed Joseph, son of the patriarch Jacob, over all the land of Egypt to save grain for the people, so when the fullness of time had come and He was about to send to earth His only-begotten Son, the Savior of the world, He chose another Joseph, of whom the first had been the type, and He made him the lord and chief of His household and possessions, the guardian of His choicest treasures.*

*Indeed, he had as his spouse the Immaculate Virgin Mary, of whom was born by the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ our Lord, who deigned to be reputed in the sight of men as the son of Joseph, and was subject to him.*

*Him whom countless kings and prophets had desired to see, Joseph not only saw but conversed with, and embraced in paternal affection, and kissed. He most diligently reared Him whom the faithful were to receive as the bread that came down from heaven whereby they might obtain eternal life.*

*Because of this sublime dignity which God conferred on his most faithful servant, the Church has always most highly honored and praised blessed Joseph next to his spouse, the Virgin Mother of God, and has besought his intercession in times of trouble.*

*And now therefore, when in these most troublesome times the Church is beset by enemies on every side, and is weighed down by calamities so heavy that ungodly men assert that the gates of hell have at length prevailed against her, the venerable prelates of the whole Catholic world have presented to the Sovereign Pontiff their own petitions and those of the faithful committed to their charge, praying that he would deign to constitute St. Joseph Patron of the Church. And this time their prayer and desire was renewed by them even more earnestly at the Sacred Ecumenical Council of the Vatican.*

*Accordingly, it has now pleased our Most Holy Sovereign, Pope Pius IX, in order to entrust himself and all the faithful to the Patriarch St. Joseph's most powerful patronage, has chosen to comply with the prelates' desire and has solemnly declared him Patron of the Catholic Church.*

*He has also ordered that his feast on March 19th be henceforth celebrated as a double of the first class, without any Octave, however, because of Lent. He arranged, moreover, that a declaration to this effect be promulgated through the present decree of The Sacred Congregation of Rites on this day sacred to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, the most chaste Joseph's Spouse. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.*

## **DEVOTION TO SAINT JOSEPH**

*"THE DUBLIN REVIEW" 1871*

*Act of Pius IX. Placing the whole Catholic Church under the Patronage of Saint Joseph (above)*

*Acta Sanctorum. Ad diem 19 Martii.*

*A Manual of Practical Devotion to the Glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph.*

*Translated from the Italian of Father Patrignani, S.J. Dublin: Duffy*

*Life of Saint Joseph. By Father Joseph Ignatius Vallejo, S.J. Dublin: Duffy*

*The Blessed Sacrament. By F. Faber. Book II., Sect V. — "The Foster Father and the Child."*

IN noticing in our last number the Act of the Holy Father which declared Saint Joseph to be Patron of the Universal Church, we spoke not only of its appropriateness at the present time, but of its being a striking instance of the harmony and Beauty of proportion which God the Holy Ghost has stamped upon everything connected with the Church.

We pointed out that this seal, so to speak, of the spirit of God, is to be found not merely in the doctrinal developments of “the faith once delivered to the Saints,” by which article after article of the Church’s creed has been first thought out in her own deep mind, and then placed in clearer and sharper outline before the minds of her children through her dogmatic definitions, but even in the very devotions of the Christian people, which, though varying from age to age, are all channels of the “one spirit,” whereby in His unselfish love, according to our Lord’s promise, “He takes not of His own,” but “of what is Christ’s, and shows it unto us.” Thus He “brings back to our remembrance whatsoever Christ has said,” and realizes outwardly in the history of the Church Militant the several mysteries of God’s Human Life upon earth. Thus too the life and office of each member of the Holy Family, of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, are shadowed forth and renewed in the historical development of the Church’s leading devotions; while by the kindred and concurrent operation of the *Cultus* of the Saints, the relationship of the various members of Christ’s Mystical Body to one another and to their Great Head is made manifest to the eyes of angels and of men, “until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ.” Nay further, the harmony of the Church’s devotions springs from and is dependent upon the higher harmony of her doctrine, which in its turn is interpenetrated and influenced by the former; for just as dogmatic definitions are the expressions of the Church’s mind, so devotions are the expression of the Church’s heart, and although the heart is guided and ruled by the mind, yet the mind is ever influenced by the heart. This is why, to use the words of F. Faber, the “devotions of one age become the dogmas of another, as in the case of the Immaculate Conception; and the dogmas of one age become devotions in others, as it was with the mysteries of the Sacred Humanity and the Maternity of Mary. Thus time goes on, commuting dogma into devotion, and devotion into dogma by a double process continually. There is no safety in devotion, if it be separated from dogma, though it may sometimes go before, and sometimes follow after.” (“Blessed Sacrament,” P. 382)

We also pointed out that this mutual harmony of doctrine and of devotion, which may very well be said to correspond with what Saint Paul calls the “unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God,” is the exclusive prerogative of the Catholic Church, and therefore a marvelous confirmation to every believer of her divine mission to mankind; for no mere human system could ever have succeeded in weaving together so many countless threads into one harmonious design, as are to be found in the perfect unity of the elaborate lacework of the Church’s definitions and devotions – we might even add, of her Ritual and Office. “There is no harmony,” we said, “in false doctrine. There all is distorted, all is discord. The fragmentary Christianity which exists outside the unity of God’s Catholic Church has no beauty of proportion, no slow and sure growth or development, no variety of devotions springing out of and interlacing one another, yet always exactly corresponding with the wants of every age.

It is but an orderless succession of distorted and unconnected doctrines, abortive efforts, and stunted growths." (Dublin Review, January, 1871, P. 203)

It is our purpose in the present article to develop these thoughts in connection with devotion to Saint Joseph, upon which the Holy Father may be said to have just placed the crown by his recent Act, at somewhat greater length than we were able to do in our last number.

Looking back, then, at the historical development of this devotion, we shall find that both the position held by the great Foster-Father of our Lord and Spouse of our Lady in the outward worship of the Church, and as his relation to the Mystical Body of Christ, correspond in an admirable manner with the position which he once held in the Holy Family upon earth, and with his relation to the Real Body of our Lord; 2ndly. That devotion to Saint Joseph takes possession, so to speak, of the minds and hearts of the faithful just in those ages of the Church for which it is best adapted; and 3rdly. That the manner of its growth is in exact harmony with the hidden character of Saint Joseph himself, just as his recent exaltation as Patron of the Universal Church is the just reward of the Saint of the Hidden Life. These are, indeed, but the leading harmonies, lying, so to speak, on the surface of the devotion; and there are many others that might easily be pointed out, but these would carry us far beyond the limits allotted to our present article.

I. The first thing which strikes us in looking back on the history of this devotion is the silence of the Church with regard to Saint Joseph for many centuries, a silence which, at first sight, might appear almost unnecessarily prolonged. Are we, then, to conclude that there was no devotion to Saint Joseph in the early ages; that the Church had, as it were, forgotten him? This would indeed be a wrong and hasty conclusion, as well as contrary to the Apostolic Decree, which states that "the Church has always most highly honoured and praised the most blessed Joseph, *next to His Spouse, the Virgin Mother of God*, and has besought his intercession in times of trouble." We might as well say that a young mother has forgotten her love and devotion to her husband, because, in the first transports of her joy, all her love, and anxiety, and interest are concentrated upon her new-born child. Outwardly, indeed, she has no eyes, no care but for her little one, yet we know that all the while that other love, although unexpressed, is lying treasured up in the deep places of her heart, and that, in due time, it will break forth again in even greater strength, and join itself with his love, so as to form the steadfast support of her after-life, when her child has grown up "to the measure of the perfect man." So too was it with the Church and her devotion to Saint Joseph, for, ever since God became man, the type of the mother and the child is that which





best explains the apparent difficulties of “the mystery of the godliness manifest in the flesh.” In order, then, the better to understand the Church’s long silence about Saint Joseph, let us dwell a little upon this comparison of the mother and the child. As we shall shortly see, it is pregnant with an even deeper meaning.

In the early ages the Church was wholly busied with the “Man-Child,” which the old dragon was seeking to devour. She herself had to flee away into the wilderness, “into a place prepared by God, and to be fed by Him for a thousand two hundred and sixty days.” She had to see that her “child was taken up to God and seated on His Throne;” she had to teach mankind that her little one was “God of God, Light of light, very God of very God;” God and man, yet one Christ; one, “not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by the taking of the manhood into God.” To bring this out before the eyes of men, - to lay forever in their hearts the sure foundations of Revealed Truth, she had to concentrate all her love, all her devotion, all her interest, all her care, upon the great central figure of the Holy Family, the child of Mary, the foster-child of Joseph, and to proclaim the relation in which He, the God-Man, stood both to God and men. It was meet then and fitting that there should fall first of all from her lips the clear enunciation of the great fundamental doctrines of the Trinity and Unity, and of the Unity in Trinity, of the Perfect Manhood of Jesus, of His Eternal Godhead, of His One Person, of the unconfusedness of His Natures, of the duality of His Wills, of His Rights and Prerogatives, and “all those magnificent truths about His Soul, and the method of the Hypostatic Union, which were to be left to the faithful as so many prolific fountains of glorious theology.” (“Blessed Sacrament,” Page 197) Then, as time went on, she had to teach the true doctrine of the everlasting years, - how matter was not eternal, but the creation of God, who in time had Himself become a creature; how evil had entered into the world and sin, and death by sin; and how both death and sin had been swallowed up in victory by the Death and Resurrection of the Human Body of her God. And, last of all, in the middle ages of her life she set the Crown, as it were, upon the whole of her grand system concerning His Real Body, by proclaiming the great central truth of the reality of its Presence in her midst in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and by enthroning it high above her altars, as the source of all her life and strength. The “Man-Child had been taken up to God, and set upon His Throne,” and lo! He was no longer a child; He had grown in her system of doctrine “unto the measure of the Perfect Man!”

And yet another harmony! All the while that the Church had been gazing upon the face of the Holy Child Jesus, she had felt that she herself was but the type of another, even His Real Mother. All the while she had felt that her own glorious prerogatives and privileges belonged not to herself alone, but to the Mother of God as well, and that everything in God’s Word which had been spoken of herself, as of His kingdom of grace or glory had been no less truly spoken of the Blessed Mary, as its highest living type, and most perfect living representative. Thus the Church had recognized in herself the image and likeness of Mary, and, with the instinct of a true mother’s heart, had found no better way of securing the adoration of the Son, than by fencing it round-about with the worship of the Mother. And so it came to pass that, without ever lifting her eyes from the Holy Child, the Church began to gaze more earnestly upon the face of the Mother of God, and to drink in ever more and more the majesty and beauty of her spotless purity, which lay even as “a sea of glass like unto crystal in the sight of His Throne.”

Then gradually she unfolded to her children the royal dignity of God's Mother, her high prerogatives, her glorious privileges, her freedom from actual sin, her marvelous grace; the dogma of her Divine Maternity in relation both to God and men assuming, as time went on, the same central position in the doctrinal system of the Mother, as that which was occupied by the dogma of the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of God Incarnate which He had drawn from her own virginal Blood, in the doctrinal system of the Son. Each doctrine became the centre of its own system, in which all other doctrines met, and thus clearly and distinctly was realized in the Church's mind the true position of the Mother as well as of the Son, of Mary as well as of Jesus.

But this was not all. Throughout the whole of this process of development, (and here we have harmony within harmony,) the devotions of the Church had corresponded, and gone hand in hand with her doctrine. "As the noise and dust of all the conflicts with heresy settled down," says F. Faber, "clear to the eyes of all, as it was to Saint John in the island of Patmos, rose the gorgeous vision of the Mother of the Man-Child, with twelve stars around her head, and the moon beneath her feet. Thus the adoration of Jesus and the devotion to Mary had taken their places immovably *in the sense of the faithful, and in the practical system* of the Church, one shedding light upon the other, and both instructing, illuminating, nourishing, and sanctifying the people." It would be interesting to point this out in detail, in reference both to the Son and the Mother, and to contrast the devotional aspect of the Early and Mediaeval Church with that of the Modern, as illustrative of the distinctive doctrinal aspect of each period; but such a task would require an article to itself. We must hurry on, merely touching upon the subject when we come to speak on the devotion to Saint Joseph.

Our readers will have perceived that in the course of our rapid sketch of the Church's doctrinal development we paused at the solemn enthronement of the Real Body of Christ in the outward worship of the members of His Mystical Body. We did so advisedly, for we believe that in very truth this was the centre and turning point of the Church's mystical life. From that moment the current of her thought and love passed into another channel; but it was only the channel that was changed, the deep waters of her doctrine and devotion were still the same as when they first gushed forth from the open side of the Second Adam during His Death-sleep on Calvary. The cycle of the doctrines relating to Christ's Real Body having been completed, these in their turn began to give place to those which related to His Mystical Body. And so the Church unfolded before the eyes of men its constitution, its authority, its sacraments, and its rites; ever bring out into clearer light the mutual relationship of its members, whether militant, suffering, or glorified, as well as the royal dignity, prerogatives, and privileges of its earthly head, the Holy Roman Pontiff, until that long-looked for Midsummer day came at last when, not yet a year ago, she crowned her doctrine about Christ's Mystical Body with the solemn definition of the Infallibility of His Vicar upon earth. And so too, by a parallel development, the grand doctrine of the Divine Maternity of Mary, who is the Mother of Christ's Mystical Body, because she is the true Mother of His Real Body, gradually unfolded all the riches of its treasures, until the happy morning dawned, which many kings and prophets have desired to see, and have not seen, but which we have seen, when the Mother of the Man-Child appeared seated upon her throne, high above this poor fallen world of ours, not only with twelve stars around her head, and the

moon beneath her feet, but clothed with the stainless rays of the Sun of Justice. And yet again, to this further development of doctrine the development of devotion had exactly corresponded. Hence all that striking multiplication of special devotions to the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, which harmonize so beautifully with the later developments of doctrine, and with the necessities of the later times, and which may be said to date or at least to spring from the solemn enthronement of the Blessed Sacrament in the outward worship of the Church, devotions to our Lord's Passion, to His Head crowned with thorns, to His wounded hands and feet, to His open bleeding side, to His pierced Heart, to His red precious Blood. Hence, too, the multiplication of feasts and devotions of almost infinite variety in honour of the Mother of God, by which both the Head and the members of the Mystical Body are knit ever closer together in the embrace of her maternal love. And these too spring from increase of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, these too may be said to date from its solemn enthronement in the outward worship of the Church. "Who can doubt," says F. Faber in that same suggestive book from which we have already quoted, "that there is a close and invariable connection between devotion to our dear Mother and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament? The force of terms would be enough to prove it. The lives of the Saints and the teaching of spiritual books are both full of it. But we do not need them for proofs; for the experience of every one of us proves it decisively, to ourselves at least. We have felt and known that in proportion as we loved our Blessed Lady our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament grew more tender and more reverent, and the more we were with the Blessed Sacrament, even without seeming to think of Mary, the more an intense devotion to her took possession of the very depths of our heart. This is a phenomenon which is universal throughout the life of the Church, and which needs no further commentary than the remembrance that one is the Mother, and one the Son."



We have dwelt somewhat at length upon the position held by the Son and the Mother in the doctrinal and devotional development of the Church's mystical life, because it not only helps us to understand the silence of the early and even the mediaeval Church about Saint Joseph, (not however to the entire exclusion of other reasons for this silence,) but it also enables us to point out the fitness both of time and manner in which devotion to the Foster-Father of our Lord first began to join itself on to the earlier devotions of which we have been speaking, in order with them to complete the full and perfect mystical development which they had begun. To make use for a moment of another comparison, borrowed from that glorious architecture which sprang from the inspiration of the Mediaeval



Church, we may compare the development of doctrines relating to Christ's Real Body to the costly sanctuary of some vast cathedral, with the dogma of the Real Presence as its high altar and tabernacle. This is first built. Then after this comes the long nave, or central aisle, built out of the hewn stones of the doctrines which relate to our Lord's Mystical Body. Then side by side with the great central aisle there springs up on the right another aisle of delicate and smaller proportions, terminating in the Lady Chapel of the worship of God's Mother. Then, last of all, in the fullness of time, in order to complete the three-aisled temple of the Triune God, the third aisle is raised under the patronage of the third person of the earthly Trinity, who is himself the shadow of the Eternal Father, the Foster-Father of Jesus and the Spouse of Mary. Nor should we forget, if we would complete the comparison, the chapels of the Saints, which cluster round the sanctuary and gird the aisles, thus forming, as it were, an outer circle of worship around Mary, Jesus, and Joseph.

It now remains for us to trace, so far as we may be able, the origin of devotion to Saint Joseph. We have said that it was of later growth, but in speaking of the Mother and her Child we have implied all along that in germ it had existed from the first. How indeed could it be otherwise, if, as we have seen, the Church is a type of Mary, just as Mary is of the Church. Could Mary have forgotten Joseph her Spouse, the Foster Father of her Child? If not, then must the Church have learnt from her lips the true dignity and position of Saint Joseph, and gathered from her heart deep feelings of love and devotion to him. Surely we can have no doubt of this, since Mary was left by her Son to be the teacher even of the Apostles and of the Infant Church. Still, as we have pointed out at considerable length, the very duties of the Church towards the Child required, not indeed the exclusion, but the temporary suppression of all other feelings. Nor can we argue from the early establishment of Mary's true position in the Church's doctrinal and devotional system that a like privilege was extended to Saint Joseph; for we saw that the doctrine of the Divine Maternity was the safeguard of the Godhead of her Son, whereas until belief in His Godhead had been firmly rooted into the sense of the faithful, devotion to an earthly father, foster-father though he might be, might have over shadowed the true Paternity of His Father who was in heaven.>(\*Saint Bernardine of Sienna, Sermon de Saint Josepho) And yet we meet with anticipations, as it were, of this devotion scattered here and there in the early Church, and distinct and numerous enough to convince us that although unexpressed by the general voice of the Church, it lay ever pent up in the silence of her heart. And it is no doubt to these anticipations of her later practice that the Apostolic Decree alludes in the words already quoted, although, if we mistake not, the Holy Father intends to refer to the Church's implicit rather than explicit recognition of Saint Joseph's position in the heavenly Hierarchy.

In looking for any early indications of the Church's devotion to the Foster-Father of our Lord, our eyes naturally turn first of all to the East, and especially to those countries in which recollections of the Sacred Infancy and of the Holy Family may be supposed to have been more vividly preserved. Nor are we altogether disappointed, for it seems not improbable, according to Papebroeck, that the traditional recollection of Saint Joseph's stay in Egypt had led to his veneration and the celebration of his festival amongst the Copts, even before Saint Athanasius sent missionaries in the fourth century to instruct the Abyssinian nation in the rites of the Church of Alexandria. (Acta Bollandiana Vindicata, art. 10 sect. 5, quoted by Vallejo) So, too,

among the Christians of Syria, as there is nothing to fix the antiquity of the *cultus* of Saint Joseph, we may not unfairly conclude that it has existed from time immemorial. In the Greek Church also it is undoubtedly of great antiquity, as may be gathered from its menologies and hymns, and from the ancient custom of taking the name of Joseph, to which the Bollandists allude, and of which we find traces even in the West at an early period. But it was upon the mysterious mountain of Carmel, with its grand old traditions stretching back through well-nigh nine centuries of the Written Law, - upon Carmel, where the schools of the prophets had anticipated the ascetic life of the New Law, - upon Carmel where Elias the Prophet had seen the little cloud rise out of the sea, no bigger than the "foot of a man," which first spread over the whole heavens, and then fell down in a great rain upon the thirsty earth, fit type of her who is herself the "décor Carmeli," and the Mercy-Cloud of God, - upon Carmel, to which the Christians of the infant Church seem to have fled for refuge, and where, in the firm rock of the memory of Elias, they laid the first living stones of the temple of Mary's worship, - it was even there, upon beautiful "Carmel by the Sea," that the flame of devotion to Saint Joseph was chiefly, although secretly, nourished and maintained, until the moment came, in God's good Providence, that it should be carried forth from the East to the West in order to warm the whole world into greater love to Jesus and Mary. And when was it that that moment came? When was it that the flame of devotion to Saint Joseph was no longer to be confined to the top of Carmel, or to send forth fitful sparks in the far distant East, but to shine forth bright and clear as a beacon to all mankind? When was it that the Third Person of the "Earthly Trinity" was to be manifested to the eyes of men? When was it that the third aisle of the great Mystical Temple of the Living God was to rise up from its foundations under the patronage of the Foster-Father of the Son of Mary? It was just at the time (oh, the marvelous harmony of the Spirit's workings!) it was just at the time when the Church had, as it were, completed the long series of her doctrines concerning the Real Body of her Lord, and was about to turn to those which related to His Mystical Body; it was just at the time when she was about to erect the High Altar to her Sanctuary, of which we have spoken above; it was even then that Saint Joseph passed from the East to the West, from Carmel into Europe, bearing the Holy Child Jesus in his arms, with our Lady of Mount Carmel adoring at His side. It was in the Pontificate of the third Honorius, when outwardly, perhaps, even to the eyes of men the Church might have seemed falling into ruin; nay, as it had actually appeared to be falling to his predecessor Innocent, III., as we learn from the vision in which he saw its roof mysteriously supported by Saint Francis and Saint Dominic; it was then that devotion to Saint Joseph began to be spread slowly in the West by the Brethren of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, whom she herself in vision had commanded the Supreme Pontiff solemnly to recognize and approve\* (\*Rom. Brev. Lessons of Second Nocturn, Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16). The Fourth Council of Lateran, which declared that in the Holy Eucharist "the bread is transubstantiated into the Body of Christ, and the wine into His Blood, by divine power," was held in 1215. A year after this (1216) Honorius III ascended the Pontifical Throne, and only seven years before (1208) Blessed Juliana of Mont-Cornillon had been favoured with her mysterious vision, which afterwards moved Urban IV to establish the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament in 1264.) It was Mary's doing, for all graces flow through her blessed hands, but now she had brought Joseph with her; and lo! Before half a century had passed away, the solemn feast and office of the Blessed Sacrament had been established in the Church and yet a little while, and the devotion to Saint Joseph had passed from the Order of Mount

Carmel to the children of Saint Francis and Saint Dominic. "It is to the ancient Carmelites," says Pope Benedict 14<sup>th</sup>, "that, according to the common opinion of learned writers, we ought to ascribe the rapid spread from East to West of the laudable custom of honouring Saint Joseph with peculiar devotion." (+De Beatif. Et Canoniz, lib. Iv. Part ii. Chap. Xx. N. 17.) So, too, the Bollandists, whom Tillemont cites approvingly, seem to favour the opinion that the Carmelites introduced the "cultus" and the Feast of the Holy Patriarch from the East; and that the Carmelites it passed to the Franciscans, and so to all the Churches of the West.\* (\*Ad Diem 19 Martii. Tillemont, i. 79)

We are aware that F. Faber seems too speak of the devotion to Saint Joseph as having sprung up directly in the West, rather than as having been borrowed from the East; yet we think the opinion which we have followed the truer and the weightier one, favoured as it is by the high authority of Benedict 14<sup>th</sup> and the Bollandists. However, whichever opinion we may adopt, the main point in our argument as to the object for which the "cultus" of Saint Joseph first joined itself in a prominent manner to the adoration of the Son and devotion to the Mother, and as to its intimate connection with the increase of outward worship to the Blessed Sacrament, will not be to any great extent affected.+ (+Even if we accept F. Faber's view, the first outward manifestation of devotion to Saint Joseph in the West will still be connected with the wants of the Mystical Body during the residence of the Popes at Avignon, and as a safeguard against the schism of the West, and the dangers of modern times, of which we are about to speak. But as we have said, the communis eruditorum sentential, to which Benedict 14<sup>th</sup> alludes, is in favour of the opposite view.) Its remarkable connection with the Order of Mount Carmel, at a later period, is of course admitted by all. The passage in which F. Faber speaks of the rise of the "cultus" of Saint Joseph in the West, is of such singular beauty that, although well known, we cannot refrain from placing it before our readers:

*Beautiful Provence! It rose up in the west from your delightful land, like the cloud of delicate almond blossom that seems to float and shine between heaven and earth over your fields in spring. It rose from a confraternity in the white city of Avignon, and was cradled by the swift Rhone, that river of martyr memories that runs by Lyons, Orange, Vienna, and Arles, and flows into the same sea that laves the shores of Palestine. The land which the contemplative Magdalen had consecrated by her hermit life, and where the songs of Martha's school of virgins had been heard praising God, and where Lazarus had worn a mitre instead of a grave-cloth; it was there that he, who was so marvelously Mary and Martha combined, first received the glory of his devotion. Then it spread over the Church++ (++"Blessed Sacrament," book ii sect. v. In a note to this passage F. Faber alludes to the opinion which we have ourselves followed.)*

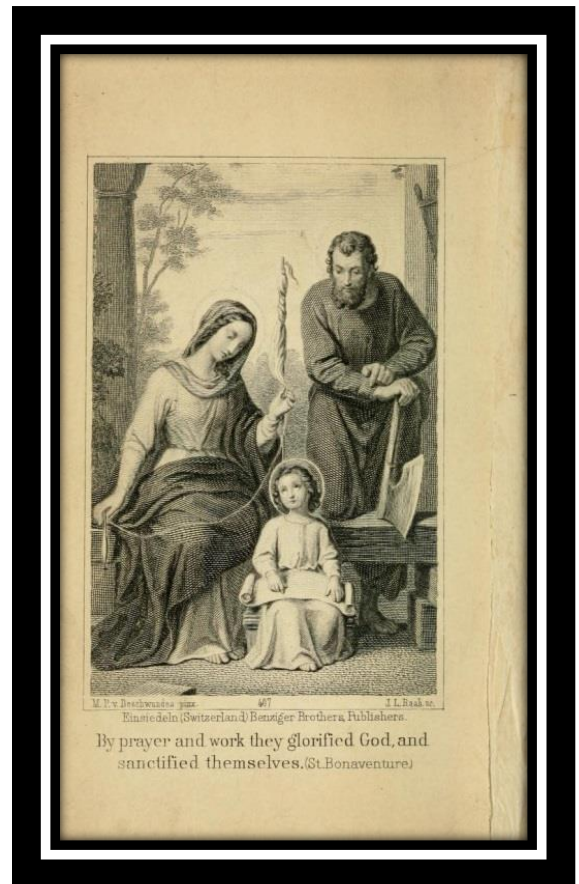
But Saint Joseph had another mission still. He had come, at Mary's bidding, not only to enthrone the Holy Child in His Own Sweet Sacrament of Love, by obtaining for It the more solemn outward worship of the Church, but also to throw the protection of his mantle over the Mystical Body of Mary's Son in its hour of danger. He had come, as F. Faber tells us, "when times were dark, and calamities were rife." In 1264 the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament had been established, in 1378 the great schism of the West began, and between these two dates there had been the captivity of Avignon. Then came rough, evil days, when men strove to rend

the seamless garment of Christ, and to tear asunder the members of His Mystical Body from their earthly Head, by setting up false Popes in the chair of Saint Peter, but although men saw it not, the mantle of Saint Joseph was over all. Even long before the storm broke out, devotion to him, as we have seen, had been slowly but surely growing. Albert the Great the teacher of Saint Thomas, the doctor of the Blessed Sacrament, had himself, it is said, composed an office in his honour; and before his time, Brother Bartholomew of Trent, another Dominican, had written his biography. Then God raised up Gerson, the Chancellor of the University of Paris, to be the doctor and champion of the devotion, and in season and out of season, through good report and evil report, to spread it ever more and more. From him we learn that the schism itself had but added to its growth. Then in 1399, the general chapter of the Franciscan Order established a feast in honour of the Holy Patriarch, and in 1414 the Council of Constance was held, in one of the sessions of which (1416) Gerson proposed special devotion to Saint Joseph as a beacon-light to the Church and to the world, and as a most efficacious means of bringing about a total reformation of the morals of mankind. Before the legates of the Holy See, more than twenty cardinals, two hundred bishops, and many doctors and theologians, he argued that this great saint, having been the guardian and instructor of Jesus Christ, acts in the same capacity to His whole Mystical Body, and that the only way to give back the Church to one husband, to one true supreme Pontiff, the Vicegerent of Christ, was to have recourse to the merits of Mary, and the intercession of Joseph, who, when he pleads with his Foster-Son, commands rather than entreats.\* (\*Ita Mariae meritis et intercessionibus tanti tamque potentis imperiosi, Josephi et si fus est dicere, quodam jure jubentis, Ecclesia reddatur unico viro, et certo Summo Pontifici, Sponso suo vice Christi.) His words were listened to; the devotion spread wider and wider; and yet another year and peace was restored to the Church, although the full manifestation of the Patronage of Saint Joseph was not to take place at Constance. Time went on; heresy took the place of schism, with its still more deadly weapons of destruction, and then God raised up for the devotion a new saint and champion in Saint Teresa, a new missionary in Saint Francis de Sales. Then hearts of the children were turned to their fathers, and the old spirit of devotion to Saint Joseph lived again with a new life in the peaceful retreats of Carmel. It was caught up by every order in the Church, while at the same time it began to leaven the popular devotions of the faithful. Whole nations were torn away from the Church's bosom; but Saint Joseph took up the Holy Child in his arms, and, with Mary by his side, went away into far distant heathen lands, into other Egypts, into a newly-discovered world, and, as of old, the idols fell upon their faces, and new kingdoms were won to Christ. India, China, and Japan, Mexico and Peru, Canada, North America, and the islands of the sea, all alike have been evangelized by the Foster-Father of Mary's Child. Saint Joseph becomes the great missionary and apostle of modern times.\* (\*Most appropriately therefore, has Saint Joseph been chosen as the Patron of our new Missionary College, which we trust will not only one day become a mighty instrument in his hands for the conversion of the heathen, but will also draw down countless blessings upon England.).

*"The contemplative," says F. Faber, "took up the devotion and fed upon it: the active laid hold of it, and nursed the sick and fed the hungry in its name. The working people fastened on it; for both the Saint and the devotion were of them. The young were drawn to it, and it made them pure; the aged rested on it, for it made them peaceful. Saint Sulpice took it up and it became the*

*spirit of the secular clergy: and when the great Society of Jesus had taken refuge in the Sacred Hearth, and the Fathers of the Sacred Heart were keeping their lamps burning ready for the resurrection of the Society, devotion to Saint Joseph was their stay and consolation, and they cast the seeds of a new devotion to the Heart of Joseph, which will someday flourish and abound. So it gathered into itself orders and congregations, high and low, young and old, ecclesiastical and lay, schools and confraternities, hospitals, orphanages, and penitentiaries, everywhere hold up Jesus, everywhere hand in hand with Mary, everywhere the refreshing shadow of the Eternal Father. Then when it had filled Europe with its odour, it went over the Atlantic, plunged into the damp umbrage of the backwoods, embraced all Canada, became a mighty missionary power, and tens of thousands of savages filled the forests and the rolling prairies at sundown with hymns to Saint Joseph, the praises of the Foster-Father of our Lord.”+ (+“Blessed Sacrament,” book ii. Sec. v.)*

And all the while, as the devotion grew, the Church herself had blessed its growth with indulgences and other spiritual favours, and by establishing new festivals in honour of Saint Joseph. Thus to the Feast on which his memory is celebrated, she added that of his Espousals, the origin of which is also bound up with the labours of his faithful Gerson, and to these again in later times the Festival of his Patronage. And now in our own days it has fallen to the lot of Mary’s chosen Pontiff (Pope Pius IX) to crown the desire of centuries, as well as the wishes of all the faithful, scattered through all the nations of the world, by solemnly recognizing and proclaiming the Spouse of Mary and Foster-Father of Jesus to be the protector of His whole Body Mystical, the Patron of the Universal Church. Thus fair proportions of the third aisle of God’s Mystical Temple are distinctly seen. From the solemn approval of the order of our Lady of Mount Carmel to our own days, from the Council of Constance to the Council of the Vatican, what a marvelous interweaving and blending together of doctrine and devotion, of devotion and doctrine! What a variety in unity! What a unity in ever-varying change! What a marvelous reproduction in the history of the Church of the life of Saint Joseph in the Holy Family upon earth! Were we not then right in saying that both the position held by the Foster-Father of our Lord in the outward worship of the Church, and his relation to the Mystical Body of Christ correspond with the position which he once held in the Holy Family as well as with his relation to Christ’s Real Body, in the days of His infancy? In the early ages of the Church Saint Joseph guards the great doctrines of the Incarnation and of the Divine Maternity, by keeping in the background, until the Godhead of the Holy Child and the virginity of His Blessed Mother had been fully acknowledged and





worshipped by mankind. *But when no injury can be done to the Child or His Mother by his own more prominent manifestation, and when Christ's Mystical Body is in danger and has to be carried, so to speak, into Egypt again and again; then it is that Saint Joseph, as the true Foster-Father of Jesus and Guardian of Mary, presses forward, and throws his mantle over the Church, which is alike the Body of Christ and the type of His Virgin Mother.* Well indeed may the Church herself sing, -

Coelitum Joseph decus, atque nostrae  
Certa spes vitae, columenque mundi,  
Uas tibi laeti canimus, benignus  
Suscipe laudes.

Te Sator rerum statuit pudicae  
Virginis Sponsum, voluitque Verbi  
Te patrem dici, dedit et ministrum  
Esse salutis.

II. Again, even from the very imperfect sketch which we have given of the rise and growth of devotion to Saint Joseph, it is evident that it took possession of the hearts of the faithful just in those ages, for which it is best adapted. Still we may dwell upon this second harmony for a few moments longer, looking at it from a somewhat different point of view. What has been the spirit uppermost in the minds of men during the later ages of the Church? Whence have the persecutions of the Church arisen? Surely the spirit with which she has had to struggle from the thirteenth century, and even earlier, down to our own times has been resistance to her own spiritual authority, as the Mystical Body of Christ. Surely the persecutions from which she has had to suffer have come, not from heathen tyrants, but from the corruption and apostasy of Christendom. Thus we find this evil spirit manifesting itself first of all in schism, in the West as well in the East; then in heresies such as Protestantism and Jansenism; and last of all in the revolution of these latter days, which, if such a spirit could be embodied at all, may be called the embodiment of the spirit of lawlessness and **antichrist**. Now how admirably opposed to all this is the spirit of Saint Joseph, the great pattern of humility, the Saint of the Holy Family, and of the hidden life! How beautifully is each advance of this evil spirit met, by an advance of devotion to Saint Joseph! It was in the schism of the West, as Gerson tells us, that this devotion gathered strength; it grew stronger still in time of heresy, as we know from the lives of Saint Teresa (of Avila), and Saint Francis de Sales; it is strongest of all now at this very moment, when the revolution has seized the Holy City, and is holding the Vicar of Christ a prisoner in the Vatican. Let the recent Decree of our most Holy Father be our witness. And so too what better means could God the Holy Ghost have chosen to heal the wounds of Christendom? ***What better safeguard could He have given the Church against the persecution of excommunicated monarchs and apostate nations, than by knitting together the members of the Church into closer communion with their Supreme Head and Father upon earth, under the patronage of the Foster-Father of our Lord?*** Yet has not this been the great work of the Spirit of God in these latter ages? And has not the definition of the Infallibility of the Roman Pontiff been followed almost immediately by the proclamation of the Patronage of Saint Joseph? And so too devotion to Saint Joseph has brought with it a closer contemplation of the sacred Humanity of

Jesus, and of the Hidden Life of the Holy Family, which the spirit of lawlessness and antichrist is ever seeking to dissolve. Hence to the “Cultus” of Saint Joseph as well as to greater outward devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is to be ascribed the great increase of every kind of devotion in later times to each member of Christ’s glorified Human Body, and to the Holy Family itself; hence also the multiplication of confraternities of the Holy Family in the large cities and towns of Christendom.

III. Lastly, we may notice, although very briefly, how the growth of this devotion to Saint Joseph has been in harmony with the hidden character of the Saint himself. For centuries it was a hidden devotion, yet even since the time of its manifestation how hidden has been its growth! We may illustrate this by the one example of his Patronage.\* (\*For further illustration of this thought we may refer our readers to the “Month of Saint Joseph” (Philp, London) recently edited by F. Mackey, O.P., with an Introductory Letter by his Lordship the Bishop of Birmingham, which we regret had not an opportunity of seeing before this was sent to the press.) When Gerson proposed it to the Universal Church at Constance, who would have thought that more than four centuries must pass away before the Church would openly and solemnly proclaim Saint Joseph to be her patron? All the while she has kept the knowledge of his sure patronage hidden in her heart, suffering indeed her children freely to rejoice in it; but it is only now in our own day that she has proclaimed it openly to the world in immediate connection with herself. Yet although the growth of devotion to Saint Joseph has been hidden, how magnificent is the openness of its reward! After centuries of waiting, there arises at last all nations and kindreds and peoples, and tribes and tongues, the prayer of the Universal Church to the Supreme Pontiff, the universal Father, the representative of Saint Joseph upon earth, for this new honour for the Foster-Father of our Lord, and the prayer is heard. “He who humbleth himself shall be exalted.” *Qui custos est Domini sui glorificabitur.*

And what shall the end of these things be?  
“What is it that hath been? The same that shall be, for behold it hath already gone before in the ages that have been before us.” As at Constance, so now once again at Rome, **peace will be given to the Church, and the common Father of the faithful will rule over the evening of her life on earth under the more manifest patronage of Saint Joseph, who is himself the shadow of the Eternal Father, “of whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named.”**

